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a cuneiform tablet or a flimsy sheet of papyrus, yea, on something more substantial even than a diorite monument. Archaeology is one of the most important of studies. While it does not give the confirmations so often claimed for it, it does give a wonderful illumination and illustration. Who, having studied in the galleries of an institution such as the British Museum, does not feel that the past is as real as the present? As he stands face to face with the monuments of kings of that old time, and as he reads their texts, he finds himself turning with a new feeling to that great

classic of the Semitic race—the Old Testament. I have dealt only with the Old Testament. The same could be written regarding the New Testament were there time and space. New light from the ancient East is continually breaking. Let us accept it for the illumination of the Book which means so much to the race.

(For model archaeological articles I would urge the close study of the articles by Dr. Paton appearing in the *Biblical World* for 1915. These articles are bound to affect a radical change in the future writing of archaeological articles.)

RELIGIOUS LIFE AT VASSAR

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Henry Noble MacCracken, the new president of Vassar College, is a layman and a Congregationalist. This will surprise those who have accepted without question the oft-repeated statement that Vassar is a Baptist college and that its head must be a Baptist clergyman. The only basis for such a statement is the fact that Matthew Vassar himself was a Baptist and the former presidents have been Baptist clergymen. But Matthew Vassar was much broader minded than most men of his generation in his views, not only of woman's education, but also of denominationalism. He never identified Christianity with his own special sect or sought to make his college a Baptist institution. On

the contrary, at the first meeting of the Trustees he expressly stated his wish that "all sectarian influences should be carefully excluded, but that the training of our students should never be intrusted to the skeptical, the irreligious, or the immoral." Of the original Board of Trustees, which he selected, a majority were Baptists, and the same is true today; but this is not a requirement of the charter. And in the selection of teachers, past and present, the wish of the Founder has been faithfully observed. The students come from homes of every variety of religious faith and are accepted without question as to creed; but the aim of those who have the college life in charge is to make it distinctly Christian.

A beautiful chapel, the gift of two alumnae, is in daily use for a simple but dignified service of Scripture, hymn, and prayer. This is held at the somewhat unusual hour of seven in the evening, and attendance upon it is required of all students, except the very few who happen to reside off the college campus. Coming as it does after the rush of the day's work is ended, and before the study and engagements of the evening begin, the service is free from distractions, and always impresses the visitors with its devotional atmosphere. No group of a thousand students could be expected to attend any compulsory daily service without some murmurings; but the chapel service is by the great majority felt to be a helpful part of their college life.

On Sunday morning at eleven a preaching service, upon which also attendance is required, is held each week, except the first week in the month, when students are at liberty to attend any church of their preference in the city of Poughkeepsie. The college preachers are selected from the ablest divines of the various Protestant denominations. They find themselves confronted with an audience of alert minds, quick to respond to earnest appeals, appreciative of vigorous thought, keen in their perception of the incongruous or ludicrous (as the preacher who took for his theme "Fishers of Men" discovered), and unsparing in their condemnation of a sermon that has no vital message. Clergymen who have had much experience with college audiences usually declare that the line between success and failure is much more distinct in preaching a sermon to young women than to young men.

For the early part of Sunday evening there is offered to those who enjoy it—and this is a large portion of the students—an organ recital in the chapel. This is followed by an informal service—likewise optional—in Assembly Hall, where the president or a teacher gives a brief practical talk on some religious theme, and others take part at will. President Taylor always valued this service very highly as the time when he came in closest touch with the deepest life of the students; and President MacCracken will doubtless find it offering him a similar opportunity. Occasionally this is varied by an address from some able speaker.

Unlike Wellesley, Smith, and most women's colleges, Vassar never has had any required Bible-study in its curriculum. For many years it had simply a course of Sunday evening lectures by eminent scholars on portions of the Bible. The final decision to place Bible-study in the curriculum arose from a request of the students themselves, who wanted to pursue that study under the same conditions and with the same credit as other studies. Accordingly, a series of elective courses has since that time been offered, covering the Old and New Testament, the history of religions, and Christian evidences; and these count for a degree exactly as other electives. In past years it has been the rule that nearly 50 per cent of the graduating class have taken, at some time during their course, at least one of these electives, and many have taken several. Further opportunities for Bible-study are afforded in classes organized by the Christian Association, and conducted as extra-curriculum work

by some of the teachers or the older students. Similar classes are in like manner organized for mission topics.

The Christian Association has never connected itself with the Y.W.C.A. national organization, because the latter insists that its active members must be members of some evangelical church, while the Vassar Association is open to all who are in sympathy with Christian work. A large proportion—practically all—of the students belong to it; and the Senior who is elected its president holds one of the most responsible positions in the student body. The Association maintains meetings of various sorts to help the spiritual life of the college; it takes an active part in the religious and philanthropic work of Poughkeepsie; and it extends its sympathies and financial aid to work of the same character in a wider world. For example, its plans this year include the support of a public health nurse in the rural districts of the county in which the college is located, and also maintenance of a professorship for the education of women in China at the Canton Christian College.

The great religious problem in every college is the same—to prevent the student from putting away religion

when, in the process of development, he puts away childish things. The faith that he brought to college is the faith of his childhood—simple, unchallenged, and suited to the life of the home. In college he finds himself in a new world of thought where his most cherished convictions seem inadequate or erroneous, and he must either enlarge and deepen his faith or else abandon it. It is exactly the same experience that awaits youth everywhere; but in college the safeguards of the home, the family church, and the familiar community life are lacking. It speaks well for college influences that the proportion of students who drift into skepticism and are alienated from the church is certainly no greater than of young persons elsewhere, and perhaps is less. The religious life in different colleges, as in different communities, depends mainly upon the character of those men and women who are leaders in thought and activities. In Vassar it has always been true that these leaders have stood pronouncedly for a broad, progressive, reverent Christian faith; and those who know Dr. MacCracken most intimately are confident that under his leadership this record will remain unchanged.